

Statement of the Honorable Tim Bishop
H.R. 4101 – Lieutenant Michael P. Murphy Post Office
May 2, 2006

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4101, which I proudly introduced last October on behalf of all 29 members of the New York delegation in the House.

Our bill names the U.S. post office on 170 East Main Street in Patchogue, New York, in honor of a fallen neighbor and decorated hero of the U.S. Navy's elite Sea-Air-Land forces, Lieutenant Michael P. Murphy, who was killed in action on the evening of June 28, 2005, while tracking insurgent Taliban and al-Qaeda movements in the mountains of the Kubar province in Afghanistan.

For his valor and sacrifice, Lt. Murphy was posthumously awarded the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. Approaching the first anniversary of the deaths of Lt. Murphy and his fellow SEALs, it's appropriate for this House to once again express the solemn appreciation of a grateful nation for their sacrifices and to share this tribute with their families.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues will recall the tragic images from around the last July 4th holiday, when it was first reported that U.S. Army helicopters carrying two teams of special forces, known as the "Night Stalkers," who were attempting a daring rescue of Lt. Murphy's unit, were shot down by rocket-propelled grenades over the mountains in eastern Afghanistan.

That tragic day claimed the lives of 11 SEALs and eight soldiers, the single deadliest attack on the U.S. military up to that point in the global war on terror. The Naval Special Warfare Command later confirmed that it was also the single largest loss of life in the history of the Navy SEALs, the smallest of our intrepid special operations forces.

Nearly a thousand people attended Lt. Murphy's memorial service at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church in Patchogue. His parents, Daniel and Maureen, spoke of how their extraordinary son's boundless enthusiasm, generosity, and determination made them so proud of him through the short years they had together.

Remembered not only for his courage and for the ultimate sacrifice Lt. Murphy made for this country, he will also always be admired in our community as one of its favorite sons. At Patchogue-Medford High School, he was an excellent student, awarded by the National Honor Society and accepted to Penn State University, where he majored in political science. He played varsity football, life-guarded along the beaches of Long Island during the summers, and after graduating from Penn State University, chose the Navy over offers from two law schools.

Like the impeccable reputation he earned in the eyes of the community of Patchogue, Lt. Murphy's brilliant naval record reflects his courage, diligence and

steadfast dedication. With firm resolve and a robust drive toward perfection, he was determined to exceed the SEAL's rigorous physical requirements and was known to perform chin-ups wearing full body armor to stay in shape.

Still, he took the time of each day during his deployment to stay in touch with his family and his fiancé, Heather, who he would have married upon his anticipated return last fall. Through it all, he comforted them with a cheerful outlook and a sense of humor.

Although under the most unfortunate circumstances, I am proud to have come to know the Murphy family over the past year and feel privileged to represent them. Today, it's entirely appropriate that we pay tribute to their son by naming the post office on East Main Street in his hometown in his honor.

On behalf of the families of New York's first congressional district, I thank all of my colleagues in our delegation for cosponsoring H.R. 4101 and appreciate the leadership's decision to call this bill to the floor. By passing this legislation, the Murphy family will know that they are in our thoughts and prayers and that our nation will always honor the memory of their son.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4101, thank the gentleman from Illinois for yielding, and yield back the balance of my time.